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THE EARLIER HISTORY OF ENGLISH
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THE
EARLIER HISTORY
OF
ENGLISH BOOKSELLING

BY
WILLIAM ROBERTS

‘A little row of Naphtha-lamps, with its line of Naphtha-light, burns clear and holy through the dead Night of the Past: they who are gone are still here; though hidden they are revealed, though dead they yet speak.’

CARLYLE.

NEW AND CHEAPER EDITION.

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TO THE
DOWAGER LADY HATHERTON

This Volume

IS

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

IN planning a 'History of English Bookselling' I found myself compelled to adopt one of two alternatives. In one, the History would have consisted of a complete list of Booksellers, with exhaustive bibliographies of each, and full extracts from the Stationers' Registers, an account of the Company's Masters and other officers, and verbatim reprints of Charters granted at different times to the fraternity—to individual members as well as to the Company. Biographical data of the earlier booksellers would also have had to be considered, but it is scarcely necessary to remind those who have interested themselves in the earlier aspects of literary activity that biography is a singularly deficient element. If next to nothing is known of Marlowe and Shakespeare, their predecessors and their contemporaries, it is scarcely reasonable to expect much information about the lives of men who played a very subordinate part in general history. Some private animosity or profes-

sional jealousy often throws a little light upon their history or methods of work, but it rarely amounts to anything more than this. A 'History of Bookselling' on these lines, therefore, would not only be a portly volume, but it is difficult to see how the matter could be digested into a readable form. The appearance of Mr. Arber's unparalleled monument of single-handed labour, moreover, was another reason for discarding a scheme which could, by no possibility, be considered as enumerating every book published, for fresh books of the early printers and booksellers are constantly being discovered in public or private libraries, the auction-room or the bookshop. To attempt to say the last word on a subject with such endless ramifications, would be ridiculous.

Of the second alternative, the reader has now an opportunity of judging. I may, however, point out that the present volume only brings my scheme up to the earlier part of the last century. I have purposely omitted chapters on several interesting phases—such as Booksellers' Signs, Sale Catalogues, and Retail Catalogues, the wholesale and retail prices of certain books, Booksellers as publishers of newspapers, and many others, with which I purpose dealing fully in a future volume, should the present instalment be favourably received.

It is rather an extraordinary fact that so interesting a section in literary history as Bookselling should have so long remained undone. My own aim has been to write a readable book on an interesting subject, taking care, at the same time, to be as accurate as possible. I cannot hope to have produced a work free of errors, which would, perhaps, be unique in literary history. Depending on statements at second-hand is too often a matter of leaning on a broken reed, but it is frequently the only one available. And even with the splendid resources of the British Museum, and a modest private collection (gleanings of several years from various sources), of Bibliopoliana, there are many points which I have not been able to clear up satisfactorily.

The books which have been consulted in the progress of the work are too numerous to be here specified, but the principal are *Notes and Queries*, *Gentleman's Magazine*, Nichols' 'Literary Anecdotes,' Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's admirable bibliographical works, Mr. Quaritch's equally useful catalogues, D'Israeli's works, Timperley's 'Dictionary,' the *Bibliographer*, Mr. Arber's 'Reprints,' Dunton's 'Life and Errors,' and many more to which due acknowledgment is given in the proper places. The British Museum 'Catalogue of Early English Books' has also been most useful.

Very many facts, derived from the newspapers of the earlier part of the last century, are now published for the first time in book form. I need hardly mention that I should at all times be grateful for any fresh information relative to the fraternity as a body, or to any of its individual members.

In conclusion, it may be pointed out that where the Christian names of persons incidentally mentioned are omitted in the body of the work, they will generally be found in the Index, in which, also, a few slips in the text—detected too late for correction—are rectified.

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THE EARLIER HISTORY OF ENGLISH BOOKSELLING.

CHAPTER I.

BOOKSELLING BEFORE PRINTING.

CARLYLE has, truthfully we think, declared that 'ten ordinary histories of kings and courtiers were well exchanged against the tenth part of one good History of Booksellers.' In the history of the whole world no movement can be pointed at whose inception involved so many issues, or whose importance has proved so universal and so enduring, as the history of books, which is practically the history of human thought itself. Literature and its most primary cognate never had separate existences, for in ages long anterior to those of books, as we now understand the term, we shall find traces of bookselling by way of bartering one commodity for another, when money had only a comparative value, or was almost unknown.

We shall confine ourselves, however, so far as possible, in this chapter to a brief consideration of the origin and rise of bookselling in England. In the early centuries of the Christian era, men had no time, in the making and unmaking of towns, cities, and countries,

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to devote to literature, which indeed offered but few attractions to those who could neither read nor write. The cultivation of the soil, or the various methods of offence and defence in the event of war, were almost the only two alternatives, besides hunting and fishing, which the early inhabitants of Great Britain possessed to pass away the time. The seventh century, which both Hallam and Guizot considered as the *nadir* of the human mind in Europe, was only the intense darkness which preceded—almost heralded—a bright and luminous dawn, for the eighth century is a splendid landmark in the literary history of this country. Previous to this, the quality of the manuscripts was generally inferior, and the collectors few. Benedict Biscop (629-690), may be regarded as the first real and enthusiastic collector, and, in a sense, propagator of books. This famous person, who founded the monastery of Wearmouth in the year 674, made no less than five journeys to Rome for the almost express purpose of collecting books, besides commissioning his friends on various parts of the continent to collect others for him. The Venerable Bede (673-735), who was greatly indebted to the library formed by Benedict Biscop, was also a great patron and purchaser of books, and was instrumental in saving many a fine manuscript from destruction. Boniface (680-755), the Saxon missionary, had sufficient of the bibliomaniac element in him to make up for half-a-dozen men. His demands for books were simply insatiable, and there was scarcely any one of note from whom he had not begged copies of something. One of his most constant friends seems to have been the Abbess Eadburga, who sent him a number

of books transcribed either by herself or her scholars. On one occasion he presented the Abbess with a silver pen. The century to which we are referring was productive of some very beautiful manuscripts, of which a few are still in existence. Books not only largely increased in numbers, but several libraries, private and public, sprang into existence.

The monks may be regarded as our very earliest booksellers. The preservation of literary treasures, the making and disposal of books, were for many centuries confined to the cloister. Whatever their faults may have been—and these were unquestionably numerous—it is only right and fair that we should accord them the merit of preserving much of our early literature and records. Among them were many who possessed an artistic taste at once exquisite and strangely out of harmony with the times, and an industry which completely overcame all opposition. The Benedictines more especially distinguished themselves in the beauty of their manuscripts, and to this order, which was the most widely diffused, we may attribute the preservation of many valuable works other than religious, for in exhorting his brethren to read, copy, and collect books, Benedict does not appear to have laid down any stipulation as to whether the books were to be heathen or the reverse. We may rest assured that the monks did not inquire too particularly into the question. The energy to which we have referred,—which also sometimes found a vent in the committal of original thoughts to paper, or rather parchment,—cannot be regarded as wholly satisfactory. Writing material was at certain periods both

costly and difficult to obtain, and the over-zealous monks did not hesitate to erase the writing on old manuscripts and substitute their own notions. Of these palimpsests or rescripts, as they are now called, there are several in existence, and to this cause may be attributed the loss of many a classic, and the existence of many more in a corrupted condition. Boccaccio, when travelling through Apulia, found all the books in the library of Mount Cassino covered with dust, and on examining these he discovered book after book with entire sections cut out, and others without any margins. He was informed that it was the work of the monks, who did it to earn a penny, to make little psalters for children; with the white margins they made mass books for women. There can be hardly any doubt that the same or analogous causes contributed to our own losses in England.

The greater number of manuscripts written prior to the eleventh century fell into the hands of the Danes, and perished in consequence. The Danish invasions of the dying years of the tenth century resulted in the destruction of fifty-three monasteries; and William of Malmesbury alludes to the ancient libraries of conventual churches destroyed by these free-booters,—*‘Ecclesiæ in quibus numerosæ a prisco bibliothecæ continebantur, cum libris a Danis incensæ.’*

A number of inaccuracies and misleading statements concerning the books and literature of the ‘dark ages’ have been promulgated through the works of Robertson and Warton. Most of these were ably and categorically refuted by the late Rev. S. R. Maitland, in the pages of the long-defunct

British Magazine. These refutations have been published in book form under the title of 'The Dark Ages.' The statements derived, by these writers, from Latin and French authors, are often twisted into meanings quite the reverse to what was originally intended; and they are, moreover, advanced as examples of a general rule. But they are purely exceptional cases. Books were, it is true, both dear and scarce, but only so in a comparative point of view. Robertson, quoting from '*Histoire Littéraire de la France par des religieux Bénédictins,*' &c., states that 'the prices of books became so high, that persons of a moderate fortune could not afford to purchase them. The Countess of Anjou paid for a copy of the Homilies of Haimon, Bishop of Halberstadt, two hundred sheep, five quarters of wheat, and the same quantity of rye and millett.' And again, quoting from another source, he says, 'Even so late as the year 1471, when Louis XI. borrowed the works of Rasis, the Arabian philosopher, from the Faculty of Medicine in Paris, he not only deposited as a pledge a considerable quantity of plate, but was obliged to procure a nobleman to join with him as a surety in a deed, binding himself under a great forfeiture to restore it.' These two instances, while interesting in themselves, along with a number of others so commonly cited, really do not prove that books were so very expensive in early times, any more than certain recent purchases of single volumes at from 3000*l.* to 5000*l.* each illustrate the present prices in literature. Unique books have, and always will have, unique values. No book or manuscript

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volume which preceded the introduction of printing has an exact counterpart. The quality and price were more varied than is generally thought, and the subject-matter was most usually of little moment when compared with the extent to which it was illustrated or illuminated—a work of the most important and delicate nature. Many books, especially those used in the Church Service, were, observes Mr. Maitland, ‘frequently written with great care and pains, illuminated and gilded with almost incredible industry, bound in, or covered with, plates of gold, silver, or carved ivory, adorned with gems, and even enriched with relics.’

The following extract from a letter of the thirteenth century, addressed to Alphonsus, King of Naples, by ‘Parrone’—Antonius Bononia Becatellus—refers to the expense of books:—‘You lately wrote to me from Florence that the works of Titus Livius are there to be sold in very handsome books, and that the price of each book is 120 crowns of gold. Therefore, I entreat your majesty, that you cause to be bought for us Livy, which we used to call the king of books.’ Ames, the author of ‘*Typographical Antiquities*,’ possessed a folio MS. of the ‘*Roman de la Rose*,’ which was sold before the palace-gate at Paris, about 1400, for forty crowns, or 33*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.* In a blank leaf of this copy was written ‘*Cest lyvir cost a palas du Parys quarante coronas d’or, sans mentyr.*’

The value, extrinsic and intrinsic, of books during the three or four centuries previous to the invention of printing, is one of great importance and interest.

But the few and fragmentary facts which have been handed down to us preclude the possibility of drawing any very general inferences. Books in those days were treasured up as heirlooms, and duly bequeathed in a fittingly serious and even reverend manner. From one source we learn that Thomas Walleworth, a canon residentiary of York, and rector of Hemingburgh, bequeathed to his chaplain or curate, 'parvum Pontiforium meum, cum quo sepulchrum Domini nostri Jesu Christi pereyre visitavi.' The Earl of Warren, in 1347, left to his son William a bible which he had had 'made' in France. A year later, John de-Harpham, vicar of Outthorne, leaves to Nicholas, an apothecary at Beverley, 'unum librum de Phisicâ;' and in 1349, the head of the house of Percy bequeathed his daughter 'de naturâ animalium, in gallico.' Examples of the jealous care with which books were regarded can be multiplied *ad infinitum*. Warton mentions several in his 'History of English Poetry.' Among the constitutions given to the monks of England by Archbishop Lanfranc, in the year 1072, the following injunction occurs:—At the beginning of Lent, the librarian is ordered to deliver a book to each of the religious: a whole year was allowed for the perusal of this book: and at the returning Lent, those monks who had neglected to read the books they had respectively received, are commanded to prostrate themselves before the abbot, and to supplicate his indulgence. Warton alludes to this regulation as being partly occasioned by the low state of literature which Lanfranc found in the English monasteries. But, he adds, at the same

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time it was a matter of necessity, and is in great measure to be referred to the scarcity of copies of useful and suitable authors. The same writer points out that when a single book was bequeathed to a friend or relation, it was almost invariably with numerous restrictions and stipulations. And 'if any person gave a book to a religious house, he believed that so valuable a donation merited eternal salvation, and he offered it on the altar with great ceremony.' It was, in addition to this, quite a frequent practice to lend money on the deposit of a book, and the universities appear to have kept public chests for the reception of these books.

Comparatively few books with valuable appendages have come down to us. This fact is easily accounted for. Valuable personal property, then as now, was not regarded by everybody as sacred, and many cases of forcible robbery might be cited. These robberies were not always committed by the Philistines. Circumstances often compelled the clergy to strip their books of their valuable adornments. As, for example, the heavy tax levied by William II. to raise sufficient money to purchase Normandy. On this occasion, Godfred, Abbot of Malmesbury, stripped the valuable adornments from off twelve copies of the Gospels. And again, William de Longchamp pawned thirteen copies of the Gospels—one of which belonged to King Edgar, and was of great value—in order to contribute towards the redemption of Richard I. Fires also were the cause of much destruction, especially that of Hyde Abbey, near Winchester, in 1141, when we are told that 'the

monks got out of the ashes sixty pounds of silver and fifteen pounds of gold, and various other things, which they brought to the bishop.' But numerous robberies were effected by monks and Abbots.

In several monasteries the transcription of books gradually became regulated upon a strictly commercial basis. The monies derived from the sales were added to the revenues of the Abbey, and books received in exchange were placed in the library. The practice of exchanging duplicate copies was a frequent one between the monasteries. From a statute date 1264 it would appear that the Dominicans were strictly prohibited from selling their books. The Scriptorium was an institution found in nearly every monastery : the Scriptoria were on the same principle but in smaller rooms. The monk most intimate with the particular author, whose work was being transcribed, dictated clearly and distinctly to a number of writers, from whom great diligence and care were exacted. The scribes were generally placed at stated distances from each other, on long seats fitted up for the purpose. The Armarian (*custos librorum*) was responsible for all the manuscripts ; had to give out the work, and also the material, such as knives, parchment, &c. The original, or that of which copies were taken, was always retained, and usually one example at least of the 'copy.' And we can well imagine the monks, in the long dreamy summer afternoons, killing time by inscribing the names of works in their possession, and sometimes delineating a portrait of the author whom they most liked.

Transcribing by secular students dates back to the

seventh century, but it did not take a decided stand as a trade for some centuries afterwards. There were nearly half-a-dozen sections. The *stationarii* were those who copied, the *librarii* sold or lent, the *relicurs* bound, the *enlumineurs* illustrated, and the *parchemineurs* sold parchment. Competition was the cause of splitting the *stationarii* into more than one section, the more noteworthy being designated *notarii* and *antiquarii*. A strong professional jealousy was the result. The latter devoted their time more particularly to transcribing from, and renovating, old books. But they did not confine their attention to their speciality. And we learn from Astle that they deprived 'the common scribes of a great part of their business, so that they found it difficult to gain a subsistence for themselves and their families.' In consequence of this the 'scribes' sought more expeditious methods of transcribing books; 'they formed the letters smaller, and made use of more conjunctions and abbreviations than had been usual. They proceeded in this manner till the letters became exceedingly small and extremely difficult to be read.' Whitaker ('Ancient Cathedrals of Cornwall,' ii. 321), quoting from Gale, states that books were brought into England for sale so early as the year 705. But 'the trade' had only an abstract form of existence for a very long time afterwards, and then it was almost solely confined to the monks. In the matter of lending books, certain rules appear to have been adopted. In most cases a security exceeding the value—real or fictitious—of the book lent was insisted upon. Where a monastery possessed dupli-

cates, it was not difficult to borrow, but if the book happened to be unique it was rarely allowed off the premises. The three most popular 'heathen' books were Boethius' 'Consolation of Philosophy,' Quintus Curtius' 'History of Alexander the Great,' and the 'Gesta Romanorum,' the last being perhaps the most widely-read of the three. Each monk had a lamp erected over his bed, so as to allow him to study after retiring to rest. We may be sure that he did not burn much midnight oil in perusing heavy doctrinal treatises.

About the middle of the twelfth century it seems that the manner of publishing new works was to have them read over for three days successively, before one of the universities, or other judges appointed by the public.

With the slow but sure march of progress, the demand for books greatly increased. The universities soon stepped in with a code of laws and regulations which reserved to themselves the immediate supervision over the public transcribers. The booksellers during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were necessarily men of judgment and learning, and the oath was administered to them with great solemnity. Their profits were subject to limitation. A charge of about five per cent. was made to any one connected with the university for the loan of certain books, whilst citizens not university men made at a rate of nearly one-third more. Stationers could not by any means be denounced as drinking wine out of the skulls of their authors in those times; and we learn that the prices allowed to stationers in 1303 for the use

of their copies was excessively small. A treatise on the Gospel of Matthew, 37 pages, was lent for 1 sol ; one on Mark, 20 pages, 17 deniers ; St. Thomas on Metaphysics, 3 sols ; a treatise on Canon Law, 120 pages, 7 sols, and St. Thomas on the Soul, 19 pages, 13 deniers. It may be pointed out that a sol is now equivalent to a halfpenny, and that a denier is a twelfth part thereof.

French bookselling was for a very long period in advance of that in this country. In 1259 the manuscript vendors became so numerous that special regulations were instituted respecting them. Censorship of the press antedated printing by at least a couple of centuries. Examiners were appointed by the universities ; and this movement was an effective counterpoise to the evil intentions of dishonest traders. If an imperfect or corrupt copy was detected, it was immediately confiscated, and no compensation allowed. The booksellers could neither buy books nor sell them without leave ; and they were also compelled to expose a priced list of those in their possession. As if all these restrictions were light and unimportant, the bookseller was compelled, by a French law of 1342, to lend out books to the poor students, for which a merely nominal charge was fixed by the university.

Scarcely anything is known respecting the laws and regulations of bookselling in this country during the eleventh, twelfth, and the greater part of the thirteenth centuries, when literature experienced an utter stagnation. The manuscripts were especially inferior ; but the cause of this is not far to seek. The

tachygraphoi, or swift writers, not only employed a number of contractions, abbreviations, and symbols, but many of the commoner words were 'indicated by single turns of the pen.' Some of these were employed by the earlier printers.

The year 1276, when Henry III. was king, and when Roger Bacon was living, is generally regarded as synchronising with the revival of 'polite' literature. Among the notabilia of this period, the figure of Richard de Bury (1281-1345) stands forth in bold relief. An indefatigable book-collector, the personal friend of Petrarch, and one of the most powerful men in the kingdom, this man has an universal as well as a particular interest. Not content with amassing an immense collection, he employed numerous scribes, bookbinders, and illuminators, to increase the facilities for study. His 'Philobiblon,' written shortly before his death, is a delightful classic. 'We wished for books, not bags,' he exclaims; 'we delighted more in folios than florins.' And again: 'O blessed God of gods in Zion! What a flood of pleasure rejoiced our hearts as we visited Paris, the Paradise of the world;' for 'there are delightful libraries in cells redolent of aromatics; there are flourishing greenhouses of all sorts of volumes; there are academic meads trembling with the earthquakes of Athenian peripatetics pacing up and down; there are the Promontories of Parnassus and the Porticoes of the Stoics . . . there in very deed we scattered with an open treasury and untied purse-strings; we scattered money with a light heart, and redeemed inestimable books with dirt and dust.' Edward III. enabled him to 'oppose

or advance, to appoint or discharge; crazy quartos and tottering folios, precious, however, in our sight as well as in our affections, flowed in most rapidly from the great and the small, instead of new year's gifts and remunerations, and instead of presents and jewels. Then the cabinets of the most noble monasteries were unlocked, caskets were unclasped, and sleeping volumes which had slumbered for long ages were roused up; and those that lay hid in dark places were overwhelmed with the rays of a new light.' De Bury very properly denounces slovenliness in connection with book-usage, such as holding a volume with unwashed hands; handling with dirty nails; leaning upon them with greasy elbows, and munching cheese or fruit over them; all of which practices he holds up to especial abhorrence.

In 1373, the University of Oxford issued a decree forbidding any one selling books without a licence. The abuses of the university regulations relative to booksellers rendered this law necessary. The Rev. H. Anstey's '*Munimenta Academica*' contains much valuable information concerning the early history of booksellers in Oxford, including 'a statute to prevent the removal of valuable books' from the city. The statute, in Latin, refers to the large number of booksellers in Oxford. These men, not being sworn to the university, carried off several valuable books and sold them, to the detriment of the 'sworn stationers.' The statute, therefore, 'enacted' that no bookseller, unless duly sworn, should sell any book, whether his own or not, exceeding half a mark in value, under

pain of certain specified penalties. In another place we are informed that, as the duties of the university are laborious and anxious, 'every one on gradation shall give clothes to one of the stationers.' In a curious indenture, dated 1459, 'between the University of Oxford and the town, to determine what persons shall be held to be of the privilege of the university,' the list includes 'alle stacioners.'

It seems almost superfluous to state that transcribing was but one of the many items which the production of books involved. We quote a few examples from the wardrobe account (1480), of Edward III., edited by Sir N. H. Nicolas as illustrating the importance of binding, gilding and garnishing. 'For vj unces and iij quarters of silk to the laces and tasselsfor garnysshing of diverse Bookes, price the unce xiiij—*d.*,vijs. *xd.* ob. ; for the making of xvj laces and xvj. tassels made of the said vj unces and iij of silke price in grete ijs. viid.' These monies were paid to Alice Claver, a 'sylkwoman.' And again, to Piers Bauduyn, stacioner for bynding, gilding and dressing of a booke called 'Titus Livius,' xxs. ; for bynding, gilding and dressing of a booke of the Holy Trinitie, xvjs. ; for bynding, gilding and dressing of a booke called 'Frossard,' xvjs. ; for bynding, gilding and dressing of a booke called the Bible, xvjs. ; for bynding, gilding and dressing of a booke called 'Le Gouvernement of Kinges and Princes,' xvjs. ; for bynding and dressing of the three smalle bookes of Franche, price in grete vjs. viiij. ; for the dressing of ij bookes whereof oon is called 'La Forteresse de Foy' and the other called the 'Book of Josephus,' iijs. iiij*d.* ; and

for bynding, gilding and dressing of a booke called the 'Bible Historial,' xxs.

The dissolution of the monasteries entailed a grievous loss to literature. Even Bale, who regarded the monks with anything but a favourable eye, lamented the destruction. He would not, he says, have been offended for the general wreck 'if the chiefe monuments and most notable works of our most excellent writers had been preserved.' If there had been in every county in England but one library for the preservation of noble works, he thinks it would have been something towards the preservation of learning for posterity. But to commit such a wholesale destruction is a 'most horrible infamy.' Many of those who purchased the monasteries reserved the books, but not because of any love which they bore towards learning—'some to serve theyr jakes, some to scoure theyr candlestyckes, and some to rubbe their boots.' Many books were sold to the grocers and soapsellers, whilst several cargoes were exported to foreign countries. Bale declared that he knew a 'merchant man, whyche shall at thys tyme be namelesse,' that bought the contents of two noble libraries for forty shillings, that the leaves and manuscripts thus obtained he used intead of grey paper, and that the material he secured lasted him for about twenty years. In another place the same writer remarked that he found several notable volumes of antiquity, the titles, dates and commencements of which he copied. Leland, also, was instrumental in rescuing a number of chronicles and other books from ruin.

We need not, however, traverse the innumerable byepaths of literary enterprise, be it the persecution of the authorities, the trials and triumphs of authorship, or the subterfuges and anomalies of bookselling. In touching upon the subject of literary history, a vast and boundless area at once appears before the imagination. It is easy enough to begin, but most difficult to know where and when to leave off, for the ramifications are endless, and the interest intense. Indeed, there is no history like unto the history of books. The hopes, the aspirations, the achievements and the results of the master-minds of the world can in no wise be regarded as unimportant. And if bookselling plays only a subordinate part in any or all of these attributes, it is at all events a part which cannot be ignored or overlooked. The influence of the bookseller, since the time of Pomponius Atticus, has been great, and it will be our duty in the following pages to indicate in some small degree the part which he, as a tradesman, has played in the past three or four centuries of English History.

CHAPTER II.

THE DAWN OF ENGLISH BOOKSELLING.

THE new birth—the Genesis of modern history, thought and movement—the invention of printing, had no greater influence upon any phase of life than upon that of literary enterprise, with which, indeed, it was synchronous. So closely allied as is the art of printing with the practice of bookselling, our limits do not permit of even a cursory view of the initial stages of the former. It must suffice us, therefore, to state, as a sort of landmark, that the first press appears to have been erected at Mayence in 1445, and that one was not introduced into this country until about 1477, when Caxton set up at Westminster. Without entering on the debatable ground as to where or with whom Caxton learned the art with which his name is so closely identified, it will be enough to state that in or about the year above mentioned he commenced a ‘vertuous ocupacion and besynese’ in the Almonary opposite the gatehouse of Westminster.

Caxton was wise and discreet. He knew full well the pains and penalties to which his continental brethren had been subjected, and he saw through the thin veil of righteous hypocrisy. Then, as now, the men who were loudest in advocating charity were

the quickest to resent, and the severest to punish those who attempted to put that estimable quality into force. Religious *vade-mecums* were naturally the best 'selling' books, and Caxton printed many such, but he confined his attention principally to the production and sale of the old romances and tales of chivalry at that time so popular. The charm and fascination of mediæval England for students at the present day cannot by any justification be extended to the dreary stuff with which our forefathers satisfied their mental appetites. Although we know nearly everything connected with Caxton and his books,—thanks to the energy of Mr. William Blades—there is one particular phase of his bookselling career of which we know scarcely anything. We have no clear records relative to the charges made for the sixty or seventy books which he printed, published and sold; we have little means of arriving at an approximate calculation as to which sold best, although several of them ran into a second edition, and, in the instance of 'The Golden Legende' (1483) a third was called for. But the amount of Caxton's funeral expenses justify the conclusion that he was of some considerable importance and wealth, which again, might have been acquired through channels other than bookselling. The demand for books at this period was not so much due to the increased supply as to the great reduction in the prices. This reduction, soon after printing was introduced, amounted to about four-fifths. In the 'Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York,' 1503, we have the following entry:—

'Itm for a prymer and saulter, xxd.'

a sum which Mr. Charles Knight pointed out would then have bought half a load of barley, and was about equal to the six days' wage of a labourer. As time went on, and the people became more enlightened, the demand for books increased, than which there was no more effectual way of calling cheap books into existence.

The first printers not only printed a book, but finished it off in every respect, and then sold it. The mechanical production was naturally a very tedious process, and many specimens still in existence are monuments of patience and artistic skill. The peculiarities of early books were very numerous, and a few of these are thus pointed out:—All the ancient printers, or at least those of the fifteenth century, had only very small presses, and two folio pages, little larger than two pages of foolscap, was the largest surface they could print. It is probable, also, that the system of laying down pages, or 'imposing' them, that we now have, was not then known. Their mode of procedure was as follows. They took a certain number of sheets of paper—three, four, five, or more—and folded them in the middle, the quantity forming a section. Three sheets, thus folded or 'quired,' is called a ternion; four sheets a quarternion, and so on. Hence the first sheet would contain the first two pages of the ternion and the last two pages—that is, pages 1 and 2 and 11 and 12. The second sheet, lying inside the first, would contain pages 3 and 4 and 9 and 10; the third sheet having pages 5 and 6 and 7 and 8. If the reader will take three slips of paper, and fold them in the same manner,

marking the number of the pages, the process will be easily understood. It is obvious that when a system of this kind was adopted, there was danger lest the loose sheets should become disarranged, and not follow in their proper order. To obviate such an accident, there was written at the bottom of the first page of each leaf a Roman numeral, as j, ij, iij, (1, 2, 3), and so on. This plan was originally adopted by the scribes, and the printers merely imitated it. But the book being made up of a number of quires, there was a danger lest the quires themselves should become disarranged. To prevent this there was at the foot of each page written a letter of the alphabet. The first sheet would bear the letter a, the second b, and so on. When these two indications were present, the binder could never be in doubt as to the order of the different sheets. The first page of the book was marked a j, the third page a ij, the fifth page a iij, and so forth. The next quire presented the letters b j, b ij, b iij, and so on. These indications at the feet of the pages are known as signatures. When the page bears one of them it is said to be 'signed,' and where there is no mark of the kind it is said to be 'unsigned.' In the earliest books the signatures were written with a pen, and the fact that many copies which have been preserved do not now bear signatures, is owing to the fact of their being written so close to the margin that they have since been cut off, while the book was being rebound. It was many years after the invention of typography that signatures were printed along with the matter of the pages. The earliest instance we have of the

use of printed signatures is in the 'Preceptorium Divine Legis' of Johannes Nider, printed at Cologne, by Johann Koelhof, in 1472. It has, however, been pointed out that the inventor of signatures was Anthony Zarot, who introduced the art of printing into Milan, and that they were inserted in an edition of Terence printed by him in 1470. The point is purely typographical.

Speaking of early bookbinding, Mr. Charles Knight observes that 'the board between which the leaves were fastened, was as thick as the panel of a door. This was covered with leather, sometimes embossed with the most ingenious devices. There were large brass nails, with ornamental heads, on the outside of this cover, with magnificent corners to the lids. In addition, there were clasps. The back was rendered solid with paste and glue, so as to last for centuries. Erasmus says of such a book, as for Thomas Aquinas' *Secunda Secunde*, no "man can carry it about, much less get it into his head." An ancient woodcut shews us the binder hammering at the leaves to make them flat, and a lad sewing the leaves in a frame, very much like that still in use.'

The number of copies printed of each impression could not have been large,—probably not more than a hundred or two at the outside of even very popular books. The market experienced no glut for a long period after Caxton. Caxton rarely undertook the publication of a work unless he had some sort of guarantee, or unless the persuasions of 'many noble and divers gentlemen' resolved themselves into some tangible proof. In 1483, the scarcity of books

appears to have been so great that an Act of Parliament was passed to promote their importation from foreign countries.

In addition to printing and selling, Caxton almost invariably edited, rearranged, and sometimes wrote or translated the works which he published,—a practice common with the earlier printers. The 'Noble Hystories of Kynge Arthur' (1485), for example, was 'deuyded in to xxi bookes chapytred and empynted and fynysshed, in thabbey westmestre.' To nearly every book which he printed Caxton added prefaces or prologues, explanatory or otherwise, which are exceedingly characteristic. In the case of 'the Boke Eneydos' (1490), he states that 'this present book is not for a rude uplandish man to labour therein, nor read it; but only for a clerke and a noble gentleman, that feeleth and understandeth in feats of arms, in love, and in noble chivalry.' It may be pointed out here that the first English book printed in England is generally considered to be 'The Dictes and notable wyse Sayenges of the Phylosophers' (1477), translated from the French by Caxton's patron Earl Rivers. The first book printed in English is 'The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye,' which is a translation from a French *traduction* of a Latin work; it was 'begonne in Bruges in 1468 and ended in the holy cyte of Colen 19 Sept. 1471.' The second edition of 'The Game and Playe of the Chesse,' without date, but issued probably about 1481, was the first printed book in the English language which contained woodcuts, but it was not printed in England.

As a matter of fact, bookselling was in every way subordinate to printing with Caxton and his more immediate successors. His example was emulated by his apprentices, Wynkyn de Worde (*d.* 1534), and Richard Pynson (*d.* 1530). The former, with a singular reverence for his master, invariably gives Caxton's initials the precedence of his own name. He published over 400 books, whilst his fellow-labourer issued about half that number. De Worde carried on business 'in flete strete, at the sygne of the sonne agaynst the condyth.' A map of London of the date of Elizabeth shows the conduit to have been at the south end of Shoe Lane, Fleet Street. Pynson's was farther up, being situated outside Temple Bar. The two men printed, in several instances, editions of the same books, but the spirit of rivalry was at all times a friendly one. Pynson's books are, as a general rule, superior in merit and utility to those of Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde. It may be pointed out that before the end of the fifteenth century there were 71 printing presses in Italy, 50 in Germany, 36 in France, 26 in Spain, 14 in Holland, 7 in Switzerland, 4 each in Austria and Bohemia, and only 3 in England. But Ames and Herbert have recorded the names of 350 printers engaged in producing books in England and Scotland between 1471 and 1600; and it is computed that this number issued about 10,000 publications.

From the earliest times the publication of books has been a fearful bogey in the eyes both of court and of church authorities. Book-censorship was essentially an outcome of monarchism, whose chief

aim was to terrify where it could not subdue. Probably the oldest mandate for appointing a book-censor was that issued by Berthold, Archbishop of Mentz, which was dated January 10th, 1486, and the contending parties had 'high jinks' of it for very many years. So early as 1515, an Act of Parliament was passed at Edinburgh, forbidding any one to print or publish any books, ballads, songs, 'blasphematious' rhymes or tragedies, in Latin or English, until such had been 'seen, viewed and examined by some wise and discreet persons' duly appointed. England appears to have enjoyed a certain amount of immunity from the obnoxious interference of the State until 1526, when anti-popery books were condemned, and those who sold them liable to the most severe penalties; this statute was repealed a few years after by another law, which sought to suppress Catholic publications with the same rigour as had just previously been evinced towards books propagating the Protestant innovation. Dr. Furnivall has published, in 'Political, Religious, and Love Poems,' a curious 'List of Books Proscribed in 1531,' dated the first Sunday in Advent. It runs thus: 'These bokes folowyng were opynly at poules crosse by the autorite of my lorde of london vnder his Autentycal seale, by the doctor that that day prechide, prohibite, and straytely commaunded of no maner of man to be vsed, bought, nor solde, nor to be red, vnder payne of suspencion, and a greter payne, as more large apperyth in for-sayde autoryte.' The list of thirty books, includes 'a prologe' to each of the five books of Moses, the 'Revelation of Antechriste,' the New

Testament, with an Introduction to the Epistle to the Romaynes, the Psalter and the Primer (the last three in English), two works of Tyndale, and a 'boke of thorpe or of John Oldecastelle.' In addition to those specially named, the prohibition applied to 'alle other suspect bokes, both in Englissh and in laten, as welle now printed or that here-after shall be printed, and not here afore namyd.'

The Act of 25 Henry VIII., c. 15, sought to prevent printers and booksellers from levying impositions. The fourth and last section of this statute runs to the effect that if any complaint be made either to the King, Lord Chancellor, Lord Treasurer, or any of the Chief Justices, it should be inquired into, and judgment meted out by the 'discretions' of 'twelve honest and discreet persons.' The same officials or functionaries had power also given them to 'reform and reduce such inhancing of the prices of printed books from time to time by their discretions, and to limit prices as well of the books as for the binding of them,' and where offenders are convicted, the punishment laid down is that they 'lose and forfeit for every book sold' at an unfair price, the sum of three shillings and fourpence, half of which was to be given to the king, and the other half to the aggrieved party. A similar Act was passed 8 Anne, c. 19, § 4, which enforced a penalty of five pounds for every book sold at a higher price than the 'discreet' persons should affix to it. The latter Act was repealed 12 George II., c. 36, § 3, but the former is actually still in force, for it has never been expressly repealed.

The Stationers' Company took up the hue and cry. Although this institution originated in 1403, its first charter was not received until May 4, 1557, during the reign of Mary. The number of 'seditious and heretical books, both in prose and verse,' that were daily issued for the propagation of 'very great and detestable heresies against the faith and sound Catholic doctrine of Holy Mother the Church,' became so numerous, that the Government were only too glad to 'recognise' the Company, and to entrust it with the most absolute power. The charter was to 'provide a proper remedy,' or, in other words, to check the fast-increasing number of publications so bitter in their opposition to the Court religion. But, stringent and emphatic as was this proclamation, its effect was almost *nil.* On June 6, 1558, another rigorous Act was published from 'our manor of St. James,' and will be found in Strype's 'Ecclesiastical Memorials' (ed. 1822, iii., part 2, pp. 130, 131). It had specific reference to the illegality of seditious books imported, and others 'covertly printed within this realm,' whereby 'not only God is dishonoured, but also encouragement is given to disobey lawful princes and governors.' This proclamation declared that not only those who possessed such books, but also those who, on finding them, do not forthwith report the same, should be dealt with as rebels.

It will be seen, therefore, how easy it was, in the absence of any fine definition, for books of whatever character to be proscribed. There was no appeal against the decision of the Stationers' Hall representatives, who had the power entirely in their own hands.

A few months after Mary's desperate and futile attempt at checking the freedom of the press, a diametrically objective change occurred, and with Elizabeth's accession to the throne in November, 1558, the licensed stationers conveniently veered around and were as industrious in suppressing Catholic books as they had been a few weeks previously in endeavouring to stamp out those of the new religion. The irony of fate was indeed hard upon the poor stationers!

The Reformation contributed greatly to the demand for printed books, for upon the dissolution of the monasteries, the office of scribe was practically obsolete. The ecclesiastical authorities vainly hoped to see the trade in printed books die a natural death, and the revival of the old methods of diffusing knowledge. 'Under Henry VIII.,' observes D'Israeli, 'books became the organs of the passions of mankind, and were not only printed, but spread about; for if the presses of England dared not disclose the hazardous secrets of the writers, the people were surreptitiously furnished with English books from foreign presses.'

A few months after Elizabeth's accession an injunction was issued, in 1559, to the effect that no one might print any book or paper whatsoever, unless the same be first licensed. It was not long after she renewed the charter of the Stationers' Company, than with characteristic perverseness she, in or about 1577, upset it by making several grants quite upon her own responsibility. John Jugge, her Majesty's printer, secured the privilege of printing Bibles and Testaments; 'Richard Tothill the printinge of all kinde *Lawe bookes*, which was common to all printers, who

selles the same bookes at excessiue prices, to the hindrance of a greate number of pore students.' John Day, ABC's, and catechisms, 'with the sole selling of them by the collour of a commission;' James Roberts and Richard Watkyns, all almanacs and prognostications; Thomas Marshe, Latin books used in the grammar schools; Thomas Vautrollier, of all Latin books other than latin school books; 'one Bryde a singing man,' all music books; William Seres, salters, primers and prayer books; and 'Francis Flower a gentleman beinge none of our companie hath pruilidg for printinge *the Gramer* and other thinges, and hath farmed it oute to some of the Companie for one hundred poundes by the yere, which C li. is raised in the inhaunsinge of the prices above th' accustomed order.' The foregoing names occur in a list, probably drawn up by a stationer, and presented to the Queen, first as 'The griefs of the printers, glass-sellers and cutters sustained by reson of pruilidges. granted to privatt persons,' but was ultimately modified into 'Complaint of diuerse of their hyndrance by graunts of pruilidges.' The memorandum (which is reprinted in *Archæologia*, xxv. 101, and *Bibliographer*, vi), is followed by a list of 'the names of all such Stacyoners and Printers as are hindred by reson of the presaid Pruilidges'—to the number of thirty-five. Besides these there were 140 'that han byne made free of the Stacyoners since the begynnyng of the quenes maiesties reign that now is, besides a great number of apprenticez;' in addition to these there were ten others 'as do lyve by book-selling being free of other companies, and also hindered by the said pruilidges.'

The terrified stationers were much alarmed, and accordingly drew up a petition which met with nothing but a severe reprimand 'for daring to question the Queen's prerogative.' But, 'approaching her Majesty a second time much more humbly than before,' the company was at length granted the exclusive right of printing and selling psalters, primers, almanacks, ABC's, the 'little Catechism,' and Nowell's English and Latin catechism. Roger Ward, and John Wolf, a fishmonger, treated the Queen's ruling with the most supreme contempt, likewise the Stationers' Company. He 'printeth what he lysteth' was the company's complaint. The memorandum describing the officials' defeat is a choice piece of drollery; 'comminge to the house of one Roger Warde, a man who of late hath shewed himselfe very contemptuous againste her Majesty's high prerogative, and offering to come into his pryntinge house to take notice of what he did, the saide Roger Warde faininge himselfe to be absente, hys wyfe and servants keepeth the dore shutt againste them, and saide that none shulde come there to search.' John Wolfe,—who was perhaps an unmarried man!—did not fare so well, for he paid the penalty of his daring by way of imprisonment. In spite of decrees, and a host of means to bring transgressors to the bar of judgment, the many so-called privileges of particular persons and bodies corporate were being constantly infringed. The Queen's prerogative was repeatedly questioned, and frequently set at nought. And with the dawn of the seventeenth century, the 'rights' of the monopolists existed only in name.

Another amusing episode in the early days of copy-

right may be related. Francis Reynault (or Reynold), a Frenchman who fell under the displeasure of the Inquisition for printing the Bible in English. He had, at the time of the row, a number of primers in English, which aroused the jealousy of the Stationers' Company during the reign of Henry VIII. He was frightened, and begged Coverdale and Grafton to intercede with Cromwell to grant him a licence to sell what he had already printed, and engaging to print no more in England unless he had an Englishman to correct the proofs for him.

The evolution of the bookseller from the typographer took place during the reign of Elizabeth, an interesting fact which is proved from contemporary evidence. In 1582, Christopher Baker,—then Upper Warden of the Stationers' Company—committed to paper a most interesting and valuable summary of the Printing Patents granted up to that time by Elizabeth. From this evidence we glean that in the reign of Henry VIII. there were but few printers, which were of 'good credit and component wealth, at whiche tyme before, there was another sort of men, that were writers, Lymners of bookes and dyverse thinges for the Church and other vses called Stacioners; which have and partly to this daye do vse to buy their bookes in grosse of the saide printers, to bynde them vp, and sell them in their shops, whereby they well mayntayned their families.' In the reign of Edward VI., although printers greatly increased, it became so costly an art that 'printers were dryven throughe necessitie, to compound before [hand] with the booksellers at so lowe value, as the printers them-

selves were most tymes small gayners, and often losers.'

From a sixteenth century document in the Lansdowne collection, we learn, 'that the booksellers being growen the greater and wealthier number, have nowe many of the best copies and keepe no printing house, neither beare any charge of letter, or other furniture, but onlie paye for the workmanship' (*Archæologia* xxv.). An early example of the co-operative method may be cited in 'The Four Sons of Aimon' (1554), which had been printed both by Caxton and Wynken de Worde, and was again reprinted in 1554 by William Copland; a certain number of copies were struck off for particular stationers, with their names on the imprint. Some copies have the name of John Waley, and others that of Thomas Petet.

In noticing Arber's 'Transcripts of the Stationers' Registers,' Mr. H. B. Wheatley has pointed out—in the *Bibliographer*—that 'the number of copies that went to make up an edition was fixed in the interest of the workmen. The utmost recognized limit, irrespective of the size, price or popularity of the book, was 1250, so that the master-printer was put to the cost of re-setting his book in type, even in cases where he was certain of a larger sale; and this circumstance accounts for the slight variety in different editions of popular books in those days. Double impressions of 2500 were allowed of primers, catechisms, proclamations, statutes, and almanacs. Of the grammar and accidence four double impressions, or 10,000 copies of each, were allowed to be printed annually; but in 1587 it was decided that should further impressions of these

be needed in any one year, they should consist of 1250 copies only.'

The war between the bookseller and the author almost synchronised with the introduction of printing; and it still goes merrily on! They appear to agree only in regarding their interests as antagonistic. Nearly every literary quarrel will be found to contain a greater or lesser element of bibliopolic vagary. And on the other hand, perhaps nothing can exceed the abuse and scurrilous invective which have been hurled at booksellers and publishers. For many years after the invention of printing, the press was chiefly employed in increasing the stock of literature provided by classic authors, and the producers were therefore trading on fairly safe ground. The selection was not so much a matter of discrimination as of taste or convenience. The supply almost regulated the demand. The unhappy guerilla warfare between the two parties commenced in real earnest so soon as authorship by profession became an established, if hopelessly miserable, fact. It should be remembered that the early printers, such as Gutenberg, Faust, Dolet, and Caxton were men emphatically of 'light and leading.' They were followed, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, by others whose only remarkable trait was ignorance, and who stuck at nothing to advance their own ends, and fill their own pockets. They ridiculed the notion of any other than a common right in literary property, and cared nothing for an author's feelings, which, indeed, they appear to have persistently ignored.

The horror with which eminent men refused to be

classed as authors is almost proverbial, and only too clearly indicates the status of the then professional. The feeling is not even now obsolete. 'To say truth, ma'am, 'tis very vulgar to print,' observed Sheridan's Sir Benjamin Backbite, and there was a good deal of force in the remark. The effusions of the *dilettanti* were circulated among their friends in MS., in which condition they remained until they fell into the hands of some enterprising bookseller. The poems of the noble but ill-fated Surrey, although circulated in MS. during his lifetime, were not printed until 1557. Sidney's 'Astrophel and Stella' was never written with the intention of being published, but two impressions of it issued from the press in 1591, with a notice from its bookseller, Thomas Newman. One of the most interesting examples of the 'horror' to which we have alluded offers itself in 'England's Helicon' (1600), which is a collection of poems by various writers, and published by John Flasket. The curious address to the reader refers to stationers making free with each other's property, but Flasket was hoisted with his own petard. By helping himself pretty freely to other people's work he raised a perfect hornet's nest around his own ears, and was compelled to paste slips of paper over the names which he had cited.

A sort of 'half-and-half' arrangement appears to have obtained connection with Barnabe Googe's 'Eglogs, Epytaphes, and Sonettes' (1563), which was 'imprinted at London, by Thomas Colwell, for Raffe Newbery, dwelyng in fleetstrete a little aboue the conduit in the late shop of Thomas Bartelet.'

But we will let Mr. Googe tell the story in his own way, but with the orthography modernized :—‘ A very friend of mine, bearing as it seemed better will to my doings than respecting the hazard of my name, committed them all together unpolished to the hands of the printer. In whose hands during his absence from the city till his return of late they remained. At which time he declared the matter unto me : shewing me, that being so far past, and paper provided for the impression thereof, it could not without great hinderance of the poore printer be now revoked. His sudden tale made me at the first utterly amazed, and doubting a great while what was best to be done, at length agreeing both with necessity and his council, I said with Martial “iam sed poteras tutior esse domi.”’ There was none of this reticence and modesty in M. François De La Mothe Le Vayer (1588-1672), who, upon being informed by his bookseller of the slow sale of one of his books, is reported to have said, ‘ I know a secret to quicken the sale.’ He procured an order from the Government for its suppression, and as a consequence the whole impression rapidly sold !

Great movements are proverbially the outcome of small causes. And such was the case when the contumacious John Wolfe, upon ‘being admonished that he being but one so meane a man should not presume to contrarie her Highnesse governmante,’ unceremoniously retorted, ‘Tush, Luther was but one man, and reformed all the world for religion, and I am that one man that must and will reforme the government in this trade.’ In spite of the fact that

the opposition was bought off, and that on July 1, 1583, Wolfe was admitted a freeman of the Stationers' Company by redemption, paying the usual fee of 3s. 4d., a great concession was made to the unlicensed printers, by which any of them might, with the authority of the master and wardens, reprint such works as the owners did not care to reproduce, or such as had long been out of print. For this privilege the unlicensed individuals were to pay at the rate of 2½ per cent. on the cost of the book.

Book entries appear to have occupied a very minor place in the consideration of the Company, and were inserted in the Register only when the fee of 4d. or 8d. was charged. The first copy entered on the books is 'to William Pekerynge, a ballett called *a Rise and Wake*, 4d.' The motive for entering was perhaps more as an advertisement than anything else. The fines levied by the Company (observes Mr. Wheatley) in early days formed a very considerable item in their revenue, and the amount received from them was sometimes more than from all other sources put together. Men were heavily fined for not serving the office of warden, and on August 18, 1578, Oliver Wilkes was fined 20s. for refusing to serve on the livery, with the option of imprisonment if he did not pay the money. It is more than passing strange that the leading men of the fraternity were neither excused nor let off nominally. Richard Tottell, for example, was fined in July, 1588, for keeping an apprentice two years unrepresented; and in May 1586, Christopher Barker, the Queen's printer and later warden, was also fined

for the same misdemeanour. William Norton, who lived at the King's Arms, St. Paul's Churchyard, and who died in 1593, an original member of the Company, and one of the first six who came on the livery after the renewal of their charter, was fined for keeping open shop, and selling books, on St. Luke's Day, and also on Sundays, a practice for which other minor lights had to pay penalties. Several got into trouble for using 'indecent language.' This entry, under date March 7, 1591, sufficiently explains itself:—'Thomas Gosson for his copie, "*A ballad of a yonge man that went a wooing*," &c. Abel Jeffes to his printer hereof *provyded* *always* that before the publishing hereof the indecentnesse be reformed.' This entry is struck through, and in the margin is written, 'Cancelled out of the book for the indecentnesse of it in diverse verses.' Four years later Jeffes was again in hot water for printing certain 'verye offensive' things.

The rapidity with which books and pamphlets multiplied during the sixteenth century caused each successive Parliament and sovereign great consternation and alarm at the problematical consequences. Laws, as we have seen, were passed, and indictments framed, but all to very little purpose. The printer disposed of his secretly-printed wares to the innumerable pedlers and chapmen, who, in their turn, disseminated the proscribed literary merchandise in various and remote parts of the country. Perforce, the poor printer was made the scape-goat—when caught: he it was who pandered to the party that paid him, irrespective of his own views. The bookseller

was, by the very nature of his calling, an 'artful dodger,' who, so soon as he detected danger ahead, could gather up his goods and chattels, and, to use an Americanism, 'make a retrograde movement for a stratagetic purpose.' The printer was much more heavily handicapped; but where the supply fell short of the demand, the people were supplied through the medium of foreign presses and agencies against which red-tapeism was quite powerless. The authorities were baffled and befooled all along the line. Webbe, in his 'Discourse of English Poetrie' (1586), speaks of the 'innumerable sortes of Englysshe bookes, and infinite fardles of printed pamphlets, wherewith thys countrey is pestered, all shoppes stuffed, and eury study furnished.' Generally the authorship was a profound secret; sometimes it was an 'open' one, and at others more or less distinctly implied in the complimentary odes and sonnets of friends and admirers added by way of proem. It is to such practices that we may trace many of the existing doubts and uncertainties. But much of our bibliographical confusion is attributable to another cause, in which the luckless bookseller plays the leading part. Anything that would 'sell' he would have printed without any compunction. Acting as his own editor, he had only himself to blame for his inaccuracies, and his back was broad enough to bear any amount of curses that would in any case fall to his share. A man who indulged in poetical frivolity in his youth, and who in after years became famous, was fair game for the bookseller, who would forthwith not only collect and publish or republish those tenta-

tive efforts, but all others that could by any possible means, fair or foul, near or remote, be fastened to the same authorship. In some few instances this energy has proved positively beneficial to posterity.

The history of the old printer-booksellers is a very fascinating one: their quaint mannerisms, their squabbles, fraternal and otherwise, their escapades, and their triumphs over difficulties, all give colour to by-paths which are almost as charming as the very high road of literature itself. A knowledge of botany adds tenfold to the interest of a country walk; and to the 'grubber' among the black-letter quartos and folios of three and four centuries since an imprint is much more than an imprint, for it forms quite a little chapter of a component whole. There is a marvellous continuity, not individually, perhaps, but certainly collectively, in the annals of bookselling, from Caxton, Wynkyn de Worde, and Pynson, to Murray, Rivington, and Longman. Times have changed, and we with them, but the fundamental principle—the propagation of knowledge—remains the same. Where they printed in tens, we print in tens of thousands; where they sought the exclusive patronage of one or two great men, we appeal to a circle which has no limits, to a *clientèle* whose taste is universal, and to a constituency in which every person thinks and acts differently.

It is not necessary nor even desirable in such a work as this to give a chronological account of the vikings of literary enterprise; but it will not be out of place to indicate a few of the more important points in the history of this wide-spreading subject.

Pugnacity, as we have seen, was a well-developed element in the constitution of the early booksellers. Before the advent of authorship by profession, they relieved the monotony of every-day life by quarrelling among themselves. These trade differences have many points of interest and even value to us, for during their course some important evidence has been unconsciously disclosed. Regard for the sacred rights of property was not one of the articles in the bookseller's creed. In or about 1525, for example, Robert Redman assumed and altered one of the best devices of Pynson, and also infringed upon his rights to print law-books. The case is laid before the public on October 12, 1525, at the end of an edition of 'Lytyltons Tenures,' in a Latin letter. The Royal Printer—for such was Pynson—was by no means unpleasantly particular in his employment of adjectives. 'Behold, I now give to thee, candid reader, a Lyttleton corrected (not deceitfully) of the errors which occurred in him. I have been careful that not my printing only should be amended, but also that with a more elegant type it should go forth to the day : that which hath escaped from the hands of Robert Redman, but truly Rudeman, because he is the rudest out of a thousand men, is not easily understood. Truly I wonder now at last that he hath confessed it his own typography, unless it chanced that even as the Devil made a Cobbler a Mariner, he made him a Printer. Formerly this scoundrel did profess himself a Bookseller, as well skilled as if he had started forth from Utopia. He knows well that he is free who pretendeth to books, although it be nothing more.'

In April, 1527, Redman made matters worse by removing to the sign of the George, in St. Clement's parish, the very house which Pynson had vacated. In this year, also, Pynson made another onslaught upon his rival in an edition of the 'Magna Charta.' But the quarrel was probably 'made up' in 1532, when we find Redman occupying Pynson's residence next to St. Dunstan's Church, and when, according to Herbert's contention, Pynson retired from business, and made over his stock to Redman. Henry Pepwell, who died in 1539, was one of the most extensive of the earlier publishers and booksellers. Ames was of opinion that Pepwell acted as a sort of agent, at the Holy Trinity, St. Paul's Churchyard, for works printed abroad; he bequeathed to Bermondsey church in which parish he was born, 'a mass book, of five shillings value, for prayers to be made for his soul.'

Richard Grafton, whose operations extend from 1537 to 1571, is one of the most interesting persons who combined the threefold functions of printing, bookselling, and authorship, in the early days of typography. In addition to Hardyng's 'Chronicles,' which he reprinted, and to which he 'added a continuacion of the storie in prose to this our tyme, now first imprinted, gathered out of diuerse and sondery authours that haue writē of the affaires of Englande' (1543), he also reprinted and continued Hall's 'Chronicles' (1550). Next to Grafton in chronological sequence, but perhaps before him in importance, comes John Day, whose name is so linked with literary enterprise from 1546 to 1584. Bibles, ser-

mons, and ABC's were all strong features with Day. But he is a notable personage in many respects; he published books during the reigns of Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth. In the first of the three reigns he established a reputation as a printer of Bibles, and in the last he had the distinction of being the only one in his trade who possessed Old English characters, and with these Foxe's edition of the Saxon Gospels was printed. John Foxe, of 'The Book of the Martyrs' fame, worked for Day as author, translator, and editor. Day's motto was, 'Arise, for it is Daye.' Day issued, in 1560, the first Church music-book in English, and a few months previously (*i.e.* October 2, 1559) he was fined by the Stationers' Company for printing without first having obtained a licence. He commenced business at the sign of the Resurrection, near the Holborn Conduit, and removed in 1549 to a house adjoining the City wall, Aldersgate. This latter place did not content the industrious John, and so several of his friends procured from the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's a lease of a little shop at the north-west door of the church. This aroused the jealousy of rival tradesmen, who obtained from the Mayor and Aldermen an injunction to prevent the design being carried out. But the civic dignitaries had no right to interfere, and a petition from the Archbishop to the Lord Treasurer, it may be assumed, was effective; but the books in existence bearing the St. Paul's Churchyard imprint are confined to the year 1578, and limited to less than half-a-dozen works. William Seres was Day's partner from 1546 to 1550, when

each acted independent of the other. Day died at Walden, Essex, July 23, 1584.

William Middleton, whose shop was at the sign of the George, next to St. Dunstan's Church, appears to have succeeded Redman as a printer, after the latter's wife married Ralph Cholmondley; and among his thirty or forty books, perhaps the most notable is Heywood's 'Four P's; a very merry Enterlude of a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Poticary, and a Pedlar,' a posthumous production, dated 1569. Herbert points out that there appear to have been three early (English) editions of Froissart's 'Chronicle,' one by Pynson, another with Pynson's name but pirated, and a third by Middleton. There is still another link between Redman and the booksellers of a later period; for Henry Smyth, on the authority of Ames, was his son-in-law, and issued books at the sign of the Holy Trinity, the most notable being an edition of Littleton's 'Tenures' (1545). Richard Tottell was one of the best known and most popular of the sixteenth century booksellers, and his operations extend over nearly the whole of the last half of that period. His shop was at the sign of the Hand and Star, within Temple Bar; and, in addition to the licence already referred to, it may be pointed out that in 1557 he published Tusser's 'A Hundreth good Pointes of Husbandrie;' in 1562, Grafton's 'Abridgement of the Chronicles of England;' and in 1579, in conjunction with Henry Binneman, Stowe's 'Summary.' He was Master of the Stationers' Company in 1578, and a few years afterwards he 'retired into the country, when his son carried on the business for him.'

And so we might go on, *ad infinitum*, giving the names, the signs, and quoting the titles of the books issued by the old printer-publishers ; but the list would only have a very circumscribed interest, which, as in the other cases, almost solely depends upon the particular works for whose mechanical production they were responsible. ‘The literature of Protestant England passed, about the time of James I., from the exuberant delicious fancifulness of youth into the sober deliberativeness of manhood. The age of romantic chivalry, of daring discovery, of surpassing danger was passing away. A time of wonderful thoughtfulness, of strong research, of national quiet had come. Learning had become common to most educated persons. The most recondite subjects in theology and among the Schoolmen, the highest problems in nature, the subtlest inquiries into the human spirit, the first principles of human society, every theory of national government daunted not, but fascinated thinkers. Selden owned, “All Confess there never was a more Learned Clergy, no Man taxes them with Ignorance ;” and the writings of Bacon, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Selden, Hobbes, Prynne and others, represent the attainments of many of the laity.’¹

But this healthy revival in literature coincided with a curiously decisive retrograde movement in bookselling. The earlier members of the fraternity had been on the whole fairly honest and pretty well educated,—very much more so than the followers of

¹ Arber : Introduction to Earle’s ‘Micro-cosmographie.’

any other trade. The great new birth of the Reformation called an innumerable quantity of booksellers into existence, and the ranks of the trade were augmented by the riff-raff of nearly every walk of life, who not only had no characters to lose, but gloried in the fact. They starved the authors who had nothing but their wits to live on, and dragged to the very lowest depths of degradation the struggling movement of authorship by profession. They thieved from all quarters, and then flaunted their stolen wares in the very faces of the proprietors, who, as we have already shewn, had no means of retaliation other than those of a personally aggressive nature,—and these, perhaps for obvious reasons, do not appear to have been often put into requisition. The booksellers, therefore, had it all their own way.

CHAPTER III.

BOOKSELLING IN THE TIME OF SHAKESPEARE.

I.

FEW men suffered so much from the vagaries of the booksellers as Shakespeare, for they not only paid him nothing for his 'copy' which they stole, but edited and improved him in a manner and with a degree of effrontery which have no parallel in literary history. Tradition throws a little light upon a few of these methods, all of which, however, point to a clandestine or surreptitious publication. Apart from the historical importance of the subject, the publication of Shakespeare's plays and poems may be taken as a sort of index to the manner in which sundry other works crept into a printed form of existence. All the leading authors were subjected to very similar treatment.

To commence with Shakespeare's first published book, it may be pointed out that the plague of 1591-3 was not only instrumental in causing the London theatres to be closed, but it afforded the great dramatist a little leisure, which he utilized in the composition of 'Venus and Adonis.' This appeared in 1593, on April 18, of which year it was duly entered in the Registers of the Stationers' Company by R. Field. It

was published probably by J. Harrison, of the White Greyhound, St. Paul's Churchyard, who certainly issued the editions dated 1594, 1596, and 1600. There is a very interesting fact in connection with the printing of this book. The printer, Richard Field, was a fellow-townsmen of Shakespeare's, and, granting the assumption that he served his apprenticeship with T. Vautrollier, it is satisfactory to know that he married this man's daughter Jakin on January 13, 1588, and that, when Vautrollier died in 1599, Field succeeded to the business, occupied the same premises in Blackfriars, and adopted the same signs and marks of the Anchor. That 'one touch of nature' which, to use a quaint expression of Aubrey, 'this William' described as making 'the whole world kin,' had a practical outcome here in giving a fellow-townsmen a 'turn,' and also again in 1594, when 'The Rape of Lucrece' appeared. The bookseller in this case, as in the former, was J. Harrison, who, however, employed another printer—P. Short—for the 1598 edition. There were two J. Harrisons, father and son, who were rather extensive booksellers in Shakespeare's time: the former commenced about 1573, and appears to have issued scarcely anything after 1606, whilst the latter published books between 1611 and 1638. The elder (Mr. Fleay points out) resigned his interest in the Shakespeare volumes, and appears to have altered his place of business about 1599. W. Leake whose operations extend from 1594 to far into the first half of the seventeenth century, was publishing at the Greyhound in St. Paul's Churchyard certain books which Harrison had hitherto owned; and after 1599, the latter's imprints do not indicate his whereabouts

in London. One of his books, Stowe's 'Summarie of the Chronicles of England' (1604), a little 16mo of over 500 pages, concludes with a list of errata laconically designated 'faults escaped' ! In 1602, when he issued an edition of 'Venus and Adonis,' Leake had either removed to another part of the Churchyard, or had selected a new sign, which was that of the 'Holy Ghost.' So far back as June 25, 1596, Leake had entered this poem, and apparently retained all his rights thereto until February 16, 1616, when W. Barret entered it, and, in the following year, published an edition. No fewer than eleven quarto editions of 'Venus and Adonis' appeared from 1593 to 1630. The 'Passionate Pilgrim,' 1599, bore Leake's imprint ; and at various periods of his career he either published or sold Beaumont and Fletcher's 'King and No King,' and 'Philaster,' Lilly's 'Euphues,' and, in 1637, Marlowe's 'Hero and Leander,' when his shop was in Chancery Lane, 'neere the Roules.' R. Jackson, who issued 'Lucrece' in 1616—the year of Shakespeare's death—had a shop in the Conduit, Fleet Street, and we meet with his name between 1590 and 1625 in connection with the works of Ariosto, Greene, Gervase Markham, and also Old Testament Proverbs and biblical Abridgments.

It is rather an interesting fact that, with one unimportant exception, neither of the printers nor booksellers who were concerned in the volumes of 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece' had anything to do with the plays of the same author. For some time Andrew Wise, of the Angel, St. Paul's Churchyard, appears to have monopolized the publication of the plays, but as they increased in number, and as the demand grew, this

monopoly was soon broken through. During 1597 three plays were printed. The first was an imperfect and pirated version of 'Romeo and Juliet.' The other two were 'Richard II.' and 'Richard III.,' and both were printed by Valentine Simmes for Andrew Wise. The titles are masterpieces of windy rhodomontade, and the following is an example:—'The Tragedy of King Richard III., containing, His treacherous Plots against his brother Clarence; the pittieful murder of his innocent nephewes; his tyrannicall vsurpation; and the whole course of his detested life, and most deserued death.' Professor Dowden points out that of 'Richard II.' four quartos had appeared before the end of 1615, and of 'Richard III.' seven quartos had been issued prior to 1630. This would allow a period of eighteen months for each issue.

'Romeo and Juliet' was first published in quarto form in 1597, 'as it hath been often (with great applause) plaid publicly by the right Honourable the L[ord] of Hunsdon his servants.' In 1596 it was entered for E. White; but the first quarto was made up partly from copies of portions of the original play, partly from recollection and from notes taken during the performance. And although Burby's edition of 1599 claims to be 'newly-corrected, augmented, and amended,' this was only approximately correct.

Following the three plays of 1597, there came, in the next year, two more. These were, the first part of 'Henry IV.' and, 'Loves Labour Lost.' The former was issued by Andrew Wise, and a second edition, dated 1599, claims to be 'newly corrected by W. Shakes-peare.' The latter, or 'Loves Labour Lost,' bore

the imprint of Cuthbert Burbie or Burby, whose shop was then situated near the Exchange. This particular edition of 'Loves Labour Lost' is very noteworthy, for it was the first play upon which Shakespeare's name occurs. Whether Mr. Burby was overburdened with a desire to give credit where it was due, or whether he considered the chances of sale enhanced by giving the author's name, we cannot undertake to say, but perhaps there was a modicum of the two causes at work. Burby, on the whole, was a fairly generous fellow, for in 1608 he gave 20*l.* to the poor of the Stationers' Company. Books bearing his imprint are to be found ranging between the years 1592 and 1607.

Wise published, also in 1598, editions of 'Richard II.,' and 'Richard III.,' the former being printed by Valentine Simmes, and the latter by T. Creede. In 1600 no fewer than six new plays of Shakespeare came out, and, with two exceptions, bore the author's name. At this period Wise appears to have taken William Aspley into partnership in his business, either entirely, or only so far as certain plays were concerned. They issued conjointly the second part of 'Henry IV.' and 'Much Ado About Nothing.' Professor Dowden points out that the two parts of the former were written before the entry of the first in the Stationers' Register, February 25, 1597-8. The second play was entered August 23, 1600, and a 'well-printed' edition appeared, as already pointed out, in the same year. Two rival editions of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'—of which the second was unquestionably pirated—appeared in 1600, the first by J. Roberts, and the second by T. Fisher, whose shop was at the White Hart.

Fleet Street, and who issued a few books between 1600 and 1602. That this 'strange and beautiful web woven delicately by a youthful poet's fancy,' should have been extremely popular and subjected to piracy, is not to be wondered at. The 'Merchant of Venice,' which was entered in 1598, makes the fourth play bearing the date 1600, and of this there were two rival quartos, one of which was published by Laurence Heyes, of the Green Dragon, St. Paul's Churchyard, and the other by J. Roberts. The 1637 edition of this play was published by Laurence 'Hayes.' 'Titus Andronicus' and 'Henry V.' complete the list of 1600, and these are the two exceptions on which Shakespeare's name does not occur. 'Henry V.' was a sort of red-rag to the booksellers, for at least three imperfect quartos appeared before the end of 1608. The first was printed for 'Tho. Millington and John Busby. And are to be sold at his [? their] house in Cauter Lane, next the Powle head.' Both these men, with E. White, T. Pavier, and H. Gosson, were the booksellers who industriously employed themselves in foisting upon the public as the work of Shakespeare, or in a garbled form, as the case may be, 'Pericles' the 'True Tragedy of the Duke of York,' and 'Titus Andronicus.'

The 'Richard III.' of 1602 was probably the last Shakesperian play which bore the imprint of Wise and Aspley. From this time forward their rights, or supposed rights, to the publishing of Shakespeare's plays were transferred to Matthew Law, of the Fox, St. Paul's Churchyard, near St. Augustine's Gate. Editions of several plays were issued by him up to

1615, but none other than those which had been previously published by Wise or Wise and Aspley. Law, however, remained in business until 1626; one of his earliest publications was Nash's 'Christ's Tears over Jerusalem,' 1594, which J. Roberts had issued the year before.

An imperfect report of the 'Merry Wives of Windsor,' is dated 1602. The 'rights' of this play were transferred on January 18, 1601-2, from T. Busbie to Arthur Johnson, who accordingly and in due course published it; but his name does not occur again in connection with Shakespeare. The second, or 1619, quarto, Mr. Quaritch points out as being valuable to the scholar from the fact that it contains in a great measure a different text to that which appears in the folio of 1623. In June, 1602, J. Roberts entered 'The Revenge of Hamlett, Prince of Denmark, as yt latelie was acted by the Lord Chamberlain his servants,' and it duly came forth in 1603, printed for N. Ling, under St. Dunstan's Church, Fleet Street, and J. Trundell. It was perhaps an imperfect report of the first form of the play. In the year following, Roberts printed and Ling published the second quarto of this play, 'newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was,' and this later form Professor Dowden conjectures to be due to Shakespeare's revision of his own work. In both instances the author's name is given. Ling was a rather prolific tradesman from 1582 to 1607, and he published works of such well-known men as Hayward, Nash, Sutcliffe, and Whitaker. On January 22, 1606-7, he entered 'Romeo and Juliet,' 'Loves Labour Lost,' and the 'Taming of

the Shrew,' but he only produced the last-named. J. Smethwick, whose operations extend from 1600 to 1640, seems to have taken over Ling's business, and also his shop in Fleet Street; at all events he entered the three above-named plays (and also 'Hamlet'), which were the property of Ling. His list of books includes Burton's 'Censure of Simonie' (1624), Drayton's 'Poems,' Greene's 'Never too Late,' and also certain works of Middleton and Nash, besides an edition of 'Romeo and Juliet' in 1609, and one of 'Hamlet' in 1611.

To Nathaniel Butter, of the Pied Bull, St. Paul's Churchyard, near St. Augustine's Gate, belongs the honour of first issuing 'Lear.' It was probably published surreptitiously, but it bore Shakespeare's name. It was entered November 26, 1607, but it had been acted nearly a year previously. Two quartos came out in 1608, both by Butter, 'one in 44 leaves in which the publisher's address was not given on the title, and the other, 41 leaves, in which it was. The latter is usually considered the earlier of the two, but it is equally probable that the former was the first issued. The number of leaves would be an argument for this supposition; as reprints in ancient days were usually more compressed than the originals' (Quaritch). There are few names more distinct than that of Butter in the bookselling annals of the first forty years of the seventeenth century, but it is as the founder of the English newspaper press that he is best remembered. In addition to issuing works of Casaubon, Coke, Davies, Decker, Tarleton, and very many others, he broke fresh

ground in August, 1622, when 'The Certain News of the Present Week' came forth. It was a small quarto of eighteen pages, and was edited by the publisher, who, on June 7, 1622, made another venture with 'A Courant of News.' Butter's experiments were very numerous.

From the fact that nearly all the quartos posterior to 1600 are more or less surreptitious, it may be inferred that some means were afterwards taken to prevent publication, but unsuccessfully so up to and including 1609. No new play appeared from this date until the famous folio of 1623. In 1609, however, 'Pericles,' 'Troilus and Cressida' and the famous 'Sonnets' were published. The first-named was entered in 1608 by Edward Blunt or Blount, and, as Professor Dowden points out, it came out with a very ill-arranged text in the next year by another bookseller, Henry Gosson, who had, it is believed, surreptitiously obtained his copy. Although only in part the work of Shakespeare, he is credited with the entire performance; five quartos were issued before 1631, but the play was not included in either of the first two folios—nor in fact until the third one, the rarest of all, dated 1664. 'Troilus and Cressida' concludes the list of plays which appeared during Shakespeare's lifetime. Its sponsors were R. Bonian and H. Walley, 'at the Spred Eagle in Paules Churchyeard, ouer against the great North doore.' The very rare preface to this play is most quaint and interesting, the writer prophesying 'And belecue this, that when hee is gone, and his Commedies out of sale, you will scramble for them,

and set up a new English Inquisition.' Bonian and Walley, or Whalley, published several books in conjunction with each other, notably Fletcher's 'Gentle Shepherdess,' but the examples of their books only cover a span of four or five years,—*i.e.* from 1607 to 1611.

On May 20, 1609, 'a book called Shakespeare's Sonnettes' was entered in the Stationers' Register by Thomas Thorpe, and an edition was issued in the same year, printed by 'G. Eld for T. T. and to be sold by William Aspley' or Apsley. Some copies of this edition were 'sold by John Wright,' dwelling at Christ Churchgate,' a fact accounted for by the practice of selling books in sheets, which gave each bookseller the opportunity of printing his own title-page, which was sometimes done in a very erratic fashion. The book presumably 'fell flat,' at all events a second edition was not printed until 1640. The publication was quite unauthorized, and the book is only another example of bookseller's vagary, particularly when Thomas Thorpe assumed the privilege of dedicating the work 'to the onlie begetter, W. H.' It would be foreign to our purpose to discuss the personality of W. H. which is, in fact, as fast a secret as the identity of Junius or the Man in the Iron Mask. But Mr. Thorpe was by no means a man of *one* dedication: he performed this office for 'St. Augustine, of the citie of God, with the learned comments of Io. Lod. Vives. Englished by J. H.' (1610), and this time it bore a more definite address, *viz.* 'to the honourablest patron of the muses and good mindes,' the Earl of Pembroke. Another

example worthy of record appeared with Marlow's 'First Book of Lucan' (1600), upon which occasion he addressed himself to Blount the Bookseller:— 'Blunt, I purpose to be blunt with you, and, out of my dulness, to encounter you with a dedication in memory of that pure elemental wit, Chr. Marlowe, whose ghost or genius is to be seen walk the church-yard in, at least, three or four sheets,' and so forth.

The most interesting bibliopolic phases of Shakespeare's career terminate with the year 1609, to be revived again to a certain extent, but in a totally different direction, in 1623, when the first folio appeared. The circumstances in relation to this publication have been so often retailed, that they are almost quite familiar to every one. For the sake of continuity we will just indicate the leading points. This, the first collected edition, was 'set forth,' or, in other words, edited, by his 'friends' and 'fellows,' John Heminge and Henry Condell, and it was published by the two leading booksellers, Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount. It contains all the dramatic works usually found in modern editions except 'Pericles.' The editors allude to the earlier quartos as 'stolne and surreptitious,' and imply that their edition is printed from Shakespeare's manuscript, of which there is not a scrap in existence. But as a matter of fact several of the plays were printed from the quartos. The one great point of value attached to this folio is that it contains eighteen plays of which no quarto editions exist. The second folio, dated 1632, printed by Thos. Cotes for Robert Allot, is a reprint of the first 'conjecturally emended, to

some extent, the emendations being more often wrong than right.' The third and rarest folio was 'printed for P. C.' in 1664, and contains seven plays absent from the two preceding collections, but which, with the exception of a portion of 'Pericles,' are not by Shakespeare. The fourth is notable to us from the fact that it is a sort of connecting link between two great men in English literary history. It came out in 1685, under the auspices of Henry Herringman, the publisher who issued a great number of Dryden's works, and who assisted the poet in time of need.

II.

The literary history of nearly all the sixteenth and seventeenth century authors, when it comes to deal with the manner in which their works crept into print, tells pretty much the same tale. No cause, in fact, has resulted in so much uncertainty and controversy as the tricks of the booksellers, who can scarcely be trusted even upon oath. Among many other bad qualities popularly supposed to be inherent to the bookseller is laziness. That trenchant satirist, Tom Nash, delivers himself to the following effect in 'Pierce Penilesse' (1592):—'If I were to paint Sloth . . . by St. John the Evangelist, I swear that I would draw it like a stationer that I know, with his thumb under his girdle, who, if a man come to his stall to ask him for a book, never stirs his head, or looks upon him, but stands stone still, and speaks not a word, only with his little finger points backward to his boy, who must be his interpreter; and